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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------050318Z 007729 /63
R 041155Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4310
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 1530

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SU
SUBJECT: NIMEIRI VIEW OF SOVIET POLICY IN HORN

SUMMARY: NIMEIRI CONTINUES TO REGARD SOVIETS AS MASTER-MINDING EFFORTS BY QADHAFI AND MENGISTU TO UNDERMINE POSITION OF SUDAN AND ITS FRIENDS IN HORN/RED SEA AREA. HE CLAIMED SOVIETAAPLAN IS TO THREATEN SAUDI ARABIA FROM ETHIOPIA AND THUS THE OIL SUPPLIES ON WHICH USG MUST INCREASINGLY DEPEND. WHILE NIMEIRI'S VIEW SEEMS PARTAKE UNDULY OF OUTMODED COLD WAR LOGIC, IT IS CLEAR HE WISHES US BELIEVE THAT USSR IS UP TO NO GOOD IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD AND THAT ITS TARGETS, NOTABLY SUDAN, SHOULD THEREFORE RECEIVE ADDITIONAL USG SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIMEIRI MAY 3, I ASKED FOR HIS APPRECIATION AREA SITUATION. HE REPLIED WITH A LAUGH: "AFRICA IS HEADING FOR SIBERIA." NIMEIRI THEN EXPLAINED THAT AFRICA'S NUMBER ONE PROBLEM WAS DEVELOPMENT; THAT THIS HAD BEEN EXACERBATED BY OCTOBER WAR AND OIL PRICE HIKES AND THAT AS RESULT

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CERTAIN AFRICAN COUNTRIES WERE INCREASINGLY
VULNERABLE TO SOVIET BLANDISHMENTS. MOSCOW WAS SEEKING
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION EVEN THOUGH ITS
EMPHASIS TENDED TO BE ON MILITARY, RATHER THAN
ECONOMIC, AID.

2. RE QADHAFI, NIMEIRI SAID THERE WAS CLEAR COLLUSION
BETWEEN LIBYA AND USSR BUT IT WAS ENIGMA TO HIM WHAT
LIBYA WAS GETTING OUT OF IT. HOWEVER, TWO COUNTRIES
WERE WORKING TOGETHER IN ACCORDANCE CONCERTED
PLAN.

3. NIMEIRI SAID MENGISTU LIKEWISE RECEIVING SOVIET SUPPORT WHICH
MADE HIM A MENACE FOR ETHIOPIA'S NEIGHBORS. NOTING
INCREASING AMOUNTS COMMUNIST
HARDWARE, EXPERTS AND TECHNICIANS IN ETHIOPIA HE SAID
THIS MEANT SOVIET/ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP
WAS AIMED AT NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. NIMEIRI SPECI-
FICALLY MENTIONED GDR SUPPORT FOR ETHOPIAN SECURITY
SERVICES.

4. AS EXAMPLE OF THREAT SUDAN FACED, NIMEIRI SAID
THAT THREE LIBYAN AND THREE BULGARIAN AIRCRAFT HAD
OVERFLOWN SOUTHERN REGION SOME TWO MONTHS AGO FROM
LIBYA TO ETHIOPIA. NO SUDANESE CLEARANCE REQUEST
HAD BEEN FILED WHICH LED NIMEIRI BELIEVE THAT AIRCRAFT
WERE CARRYING
ARMS URGENTLY NEEDED BY MENGISTU.
FACT THAT AIRCRAFT COULD VIOLATE SUDANESE AIR SPACE
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IN THIS REMOTE AREA, NIMEIR NOTED, ILLUSTRATED
SUDAN'S NEED FOR AIR DEFENSE WEAPONS. HOWEVER, HE
ADMITTED THAT SOVIET PRESENCE ETHIOPIA NOT RPT NOT
DIRECTED AGAINST EGYPT OR SUDAN BUT RATHER AGAINST
SAUDI ARABIA. HE FELT MOSCOW'S STRATEGIC AIM WAS
ARABIAN OIL ON WHICH U.S. MUST IN FUTURE DEPEND.

5. INDICATING HE FELT USG TAKING INSUFFICIENT STEPS
TO DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION, NIMEIRI SAID AT ONE
POINT THAT SUDANESE HAD HEARD OF ALLEGED "SECRET
AGREEMENT" BETWEEN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON UNDER WHICH
EACH SIDE UNDERTAKES NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE OTHER'S
AREAS OF ACTIVITY. I RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS
NONSENCE,REMINDING NIMEIRI THAT SECRETARY HAD
SPECIFICALLY SPOKEN TO SOVIETS WHEN IN MOSCOW RE
UNHELPFUL SOVIET ACTIONS IN AFRICA. NIMEIRI INDICATED
HE HAD EXPECTED SUCH REFUTATION AND DID NOT PURSUE
SUBJECT.
GZYM COMMENT: NIMEIRI'S CONCERN RE SOVIET ACTIVITIES

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AND OBJECTIVES IN THIS AREA NO DOUBT HIGHLY COLORED,
BUT HE WOULD NOT BE FIRST LEADER TO BELIEVE HIS OWN
PERIPHERAL COUNTRY IS IN FACT CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF
RUSSIAN MACHINATIONS. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO QUESTION
RE ENMITY OF QADHAFI AND MENGISTU TOWARD NIMEIRI
REGIME, NOR HAVE SOVIETS HIDDEN THEIR OWN DISLIKE FOR
HIS INCREASINGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE. BUT PRIVATE
SUDANESE FEARS SUCH AS VOICED BY NIMEIRI, AS WELL AS
ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC POLEMICS, DO NOT RPT NOT IN
OUR VIEW SUGGEST IMMINENT OUTBREAK HOSTILITIES IN HORN.
FACTUAL BASIS FOR NIMEIRI'S CONCERN RATHER LIES IN
(A) CONTINUING THREAT TO HIS REGIME REPRESENTED BY
ANSAR/NATIONAL FRONT EXILES SUPPORTED BY QADHAFI AND
MENGISTU, PLUS (B) SUDAN'S ENDEMIC FINANCIAL WOES,
FOR WHICH SAUDIS LIKELY PROVIDE ONLY EFFICACIOUS MEDICINE.
IN LATTER CONTEXT, NIMEIRI'S HYPER-SUSPICION OF RUSSIANS
MAKE MORE SENSE, NOTABLY HIS CLAIM THAT REAL SOVIET
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GOAL FROM ITS EAST AFRICAN POLICY IS TO THREATEN SAUDI
ARABIA. HIS ALLUSION TO SECRET USG/USSR DEAL RE SPHERES
INFLUENCE, TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION DENG'S
INDIRECT PROBINGS MAY 2 (KHARTOUM 1507), SUGGESTS
SUDAN GOVT FEARS USG MAY EITHER DOWNGRADE OR IGNORE
WHAT NIMEIRI REGIME PROFESSES SEE AS SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL
MENACE TO ITS LONG-TERM VIABILITY. BREWER

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